

House  
REPUBLICAN  
Conference

# FloorPrep

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Legislative Digest

Monday, April 3, 2000

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J.C. Watts, Jr.  
Chairman  
4th District, Oklahoma

*House Meets at 10:00 a.m. for Morning Hour  
and 2:00 p.m. for Legislative Business  
(No Votes Before 6:00 p.m.)*

*Anticipated Floor Action:*

**H.R. 3904—Science Committee Reports Restoration Act**  
**H.R. 1753—Methane Hydrate Research Development Act**  
**H.Con.Res 278—Authorizing the Use of Capitol Grounds for the National  
Peace Officers**  
**H.Con.Res. 281—Authorizing the Use of Capitol Grounds For the John F.  
Kennedy Center**  
**H.Con.Res. 279—Authorizing the Use of Capitol Grounds for the Library of  
Congress**  
**H.R. 1605—Designating the “Judge J. Smith Henley Federal Building”**  
**H.R. 1359—Designating the “Frank J. Battisti and Nathaniel R. Jones  
Federal Building”**  
**S. 1567—Designating the “C.B. King United States Courthouse”**  
**H.R. 4052—Transportation Infrastructure Reports Restoration Act**  
**H.Res. 429—Expressing the Sense of Congress Concerning the  
Participation of the Extremist FPO in the Austrian Government**  
**H.R. 1089—Mutual Fund Tax Awareness Act**  
**H.R. 3591—Awarding the Congressional Gold Medal to President and Mrs.  
Ronald Reagan**

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## **Bills Considered Under Suspension of the Rules**

**Floor Situation:** The House will consider the following 12 bills under suspension of the rules as its only

order of business today. Each is debatable for 40 minutes, may not be amended, and requires a two-thirds majority vote for passage.

**H.R. 3904** restores certain reporting requirements for agencies under the jurisdiction of the Science Committee that would otherwise have been eliminated as part of the 1995 Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act (*P.L. 104-66*). This law eliminated thousands of congressionally mandated reports on a variety of topics. While the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunshine Act will reduce unnecessary paperwork and reduce agency expenditures, it also inadvertently deleted the requirement for certain reports that the committee believes are necessary in executing its oversight responsibilities. The measure requires agencies to continue submitting approximately 30 reports on energy policy, the Communications Satellite Corporation, the National Science Foundation, environmental matters, research and development and other areas under the jurisdiction of the Science Committee. H.R. 3904 was introduced by Mr. Sensenbrenner and was referred to the Science Committee on March 13, 2000.

**H.R. 1753** requires the Energy Secretary to consult with the secretaries of Commerce, Defense, and Interior, along with the director of the National Science Foundation, to begin a methane hydrate research and development program to establish methane hydrate as a viable energy resource within 180 days following enactment. The measure allows the Energy Secretary to award grants, contracts, or enter into cooperative agreements with institutes of higher education and industrial enterprises under a competitive, merit-based process to (1) research methane hydrate as an energy source; (2) assist in developing technologies required for the efficient and environmentally sound development of methane hydrate resources; (3) research safe means of transporting and storing gas produced from methane hydrates; (4) promote education and training in methane hydrate resource research and development; (5) assess and mitigate the environmental impacts of hydrate degassing; and (6) develop technologies to reduce the risks of drilling through methane hydrates.

The bill also requires the Energy Secretary to:

- \* establish an advisory panel to (1) advise the Energy Secretary on potential applications of methane hydrate; (2) assist in developing recommendations and priorities for the methane hydrate research and development program; (3) report to Congress within two years on the impact of global climate change from methane hydrate extraction and consumption;

- \* facilitate partnerships among the government, industry, and institutes of higher education and cooperation between federal agencies to research, identify, assess, and explore methane hydrate resources;

- \* establish programs to promote the long-term interest in methane hydrate as an energy source;

- \* ensure the appropriate accessibility of data and information developed through the methane hydrate program; and

- \* report to Congress annually on methane hydrate research and development progress.

In addition, the bill amends the 1970 Mining and Mineral Policy Act to define methane hydrates as a “mineral.” The measure authorizes (1) \$5 million in FY 2001; (2) \$7.5 million in FY 2002; (3) \$11 million in FY 2003; and (4) \$12 million in FY 2004 and FY 2005 to carry out the methane hydrate research and development program. The bill sunsets the methane hydrate research and development program at the

end of FY 2005.

The Senate amendments to H. R. 1753 added two new definitions to the bill: (1) a definition of “industrial enterprise” to include a private, nongovernmental entity with expertise relating to methane research and development and (2) a new definition of “methane hydrate” to include gas hydrates found in deep-ocean and permafrost deposits. The Senate amendments also added a coordination role for methane hydrate research and development to be assumed by an individual in the Department of Energy designated by the Secretary. Membership on an advisory panel to the Secretary of Energy was limited to no more than 25 percent of the individuals to be federal employees. Finally, the bill adds a new provision requiring the Secretary of Energy to engage the National Research Council (NRC) to conduct a study of the progress of the R & D program and to transmit its report to the Congress no later than September 30, 2004. The bill was referred to the House on November 22, 1999.

**H.Con.Res. 278** authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service on May 15, 2000. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy proclaimed May 15<sup>th</sup> as the National Peace Officers’ Memorial Day. The resolution authorizes the Architect of the Capitol, the Capitol Police Board, and National Fraternal Order of Police to negotiate the event’s arrangements in compliance with the regulations of Capitol Grounds uses. The memorial service honors men and women who lost their lives while in the line of duty last year. The service will be held publicly on the West Front of the Capitol and is free of charge. The sponsor assumes complete responsibility for all expenses and liabilities associated with the event. H.Con.Res. 278 was introduced by Mr. Traficant and reported by the Transportation Committee by voice vote on March 16, 2000.

**H.Con.Res. 281** authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Millennium Stage in conjunction with the National Park Service. Concerts on the Capitol Grounds are scheduled for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. between Memorial Day and September 30, 2000. The concerts will be held on the East Front Lawn of the Capitol and will be open to the public free of charge. All arrangements must be negotiated between the Architect of the Capitol, the Capitol Police Board, and the sponsor. The Senate and the House must approve the dates of the concerts. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Shuster and was reported by the Transportation Committee by voice vote on March 16, 2000.

**H.Con.Res. 279** authorizes the use of the Capitol Grounds for the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of the Library of Congress. The event is scheduled for April 24, 2000 from noon to 1:30 p.m. The celebration includes a free concert and is open to the public. All arrangements must be negotiated between the Architect of the Capitol, the Capitol Police Board, and the sponsor. The resolution was introduced by Mr. Franks on March 14, 2000.

**H.R. 1605** designates the federal building and United States courthouse located at 402 North Walnut Street in Harrison, Arkansas, as the “J. Smith Henley Federal Building and United States Courthouse.” Judge J. Smith Henley was born on May 18, 1917, in St. Joe Arkansas. Henley received his law degree in 1941 from the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and worked in private practice from 1941 to 1945. He was a former Referee in Bankruptcy for the Western District of Arkansas 1943-1945; Associate General Counsel, Federal Communications Commission 1954-1956; and Director of the Office of Administrative Procedure, Department of Justice 1956-1958. He served as a member of the Judicial Conference Subcommittee on Supporting Personnel from 1975 to 1977, and the Advisory Committee on Appellate Rules from 1978 to 1984. Mr. Hutchinson introduced the bill on March 23, 2000.

**H.R. 1359** designates the federal building and United States courthouse under construction at 10 East Commerce Street in Youngstown, Ohio, as the “Frank J. Battisti and Nathaniel R. Jones Federal Building and United States Courthouse.” Both natives of Youngstown, Ohio, Battisti and Jones led active lives in the federal government. In addition to teaching law at Youngstown University, Battisti was appointed to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio in 1961 and became Chief Judge in 1969. He retired in 1994 and died a year later. Judge Jones served in the U.S. Army Air Corps during World War II. Before being appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, Jones served as Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Ohio. Jones served as Assistant General Counsel to President Johnson’s National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders in 1967 and as the NAACP’s General Counsel from 1969 to 1979. Mr. Traficant introduced the bill on March 25, 1999.

**S.1567** designates the United States courthouse under construction at 223 Broad Avenue in Albany, Georgia, as the “C.B. King United States Courthouse.” Chevene Bowers King was born in Albany, Georgia, in 1923, served in the Navy, and later graduated from Frisk University in Nashville, Tennessee. After earning a law degree from Case Western University, King became a attorney with the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. While immersed in cases involving school desegregation, voting and political rights, the right to serve on juries free of discrimination, and employment discrimination, King’s legal actions lead to the passage of the 1968 Jury Selection and Service Act. Senator Coverdell introduced the bill on October 12, 1999.

**H.R. 4052** restores certain reporting requirements for agencies under the jurisdiction of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee that would otherwise be eliminated as part of the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunshine Act of 1995 (*P.L. 104-66*). Section 3003 of that Act eliminated thousands of reports that had been required by the Congress. This will affect a small percentage of the total number of reporting requirements eliminated by the Federal Reports Elimination and Sunshine Act. The reports that will be exempted relate to the environment and water resources, surface transportation, emergency management, the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation, economic development, and railroads. The bill was reported out of the Transportation Committee by voice vote on March 23, 2000.

**H.Res. 429** expresses the sense of the House of Representatives concerning the participation of the extremist FPO in the Government of Austria. The measure recognizes the right of the Austrian people to express their political views through a democratic election, but also reaffirms the right and the obligation of the United States House of Representatives to express its opposition to the anti-democratic, racist and xenophobic views of Joerg Haider and other leaders of the FPO. Because of these publicly expressed views, the Congress wishes to express its opposition to FPO’s participation in the Austrian Government. The bill was introduced by Mr. Lantos on March 1, 2000.

**H.R. 1089** requires the Securities and Exchange Commission to revise regulations under the Securities Act of 1933 and the Investment Company Act of 1940 to require, consistent with the protection of investors and the public interest, improved disclosure in investment company prospectuses or annual reports of after-tax returns to investors. The bill was introduced by Mr. Gillmor and the Commerce Committee reported the bill by voice vote on March 15, 2000.

**H. R. 3591** awards the gold medal on behalf of the Congress to former President Ronald Reagan and Mrs. Nancy Reagan in recognition of their service to the nation. Both former President Reagan and Mrs. Reagan have distinguished records of public service to the United States, the American people and the international

community. President Reagan restored ‘the great, confident roar of American progress, growth, and optimism’, a pledge made by Mr. Reagan prior to his election in 1980. President Reagan’s leadership was also instrumental in bringing about an end to the cold war and allowing the United States to enjoy sustained economic growth and prosperity. Mrs. Nancy Reagan, in addition to serving as a gracious First Lady, was an active proponent for the prevention of drug and alcohol use by America’s youth by promoting the “Just Say No” Campaign. The bill authorizes the design and striking of the gold medal and an amount not to exceed \$30,000 for that purpose. It also authorizes the striking of duplicate medals in bronze for sale to the public, the proceeds from which are deposited in the United States Mint Public Enterprise Fund. The bill was introduced by Mr. Gibbons *et al.* and was not considered by a committee.

**Additional Information:** See *Legislative Digest*, Vol. XXIX, #9, March 31, 2000

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